

THE REHEARSAL.

1. More Needful to Answer Dr. Edwards, than the Rights, Asgill, or Coward.
2. The Doctrin of the Predestinarians Worse than Popery.
3. All built upon Mistake. Let it Dye.
4. Dr. Edwards makes Nothing of Church-Government.
5. Nor of the Unity of the Church.
6. What that Charity is Mention'd 1. Cor. xiii.
7. Gifted-Men More than Men Miraculously Gifted.
8. Korah no Offender. He was the first Presbyterian.

SATURDAY, August 23. 1707.

Country-man. **I**S it not time for you Master, to have done with Dr. Edwards? People will grow Weary, and say you keep them too long upon Serious Subjects.

(1.) *Rehearsal.* I think this Subject of Predestination and all its Consequences, into which Dr. Edwards has led us, more useful to have been Discours'd of, than even the Blasphemies of the Rights, or the Wild Extravagancies of Coward and Asgill. For these things are so very Gross, that it is to be hop'd few will be Deluded by them; tho' still it was Necessary to have them Detected. But this Dispute of Predestination has Employ'd many Learned Pens, and Men Good and Pious have been Misled by it, and are still. Then their Numbers are Great and Formidable, our Predestinarians at Home, Join'd with those in Scotland and Holland, and supported by some Divines of the Church of England, who are Preparing the way for them, of which I have shew'd you one, and may shew you more. This looks Terribly upon us. The Plague is begun. And the first Attack is made by Divines of the Church of England. Therefore it is Time to look to it, and Warn the People of their Approaching Danger.

(2.) For this Doctrin in its Consequences, as made use of by these Predestinarians, is more Fatal to the Souls of Men, than Idolatry it self, or the Worst part of Popery. It Un-hinges whole Christianity, makes us lay no stress upon the Oeconomy of the Gospel, but Resolve all into Secret Decrees. It takes away both Faith and Repentance,

and Dissolves all Obligation to a Good Life. Nay, it Transforms God into the Devil, as the Lutherans say.

(3.) And I have not taken much Time in Detecting it. But shew'd that the whole proceeds upon a Mistake, and that there is no Foundation at all for this Dispute which has so much Perplex'd Christianity. Therefore let it Dye and be Buried for Ever hereafter. Amen.

Country-m. And I say Amen too. And let those Miserable Souls be Deliver'd whom this Doctrin has driven into Despair, and all Wretchedness of most Unclean living, as our Article of Predestination speaks. And let them see that all this is come upon them by Conceiving of God after the manner of Men, as you have shew'd; for tho' we must Speak so, because we cannot help it, having no Proper Words whereby to Express God, yet we must not Think so, in Just and True Reasoning; for that will Involve Us in Endless Absurdities and Contradictions, when we will Measure the Eternity of God by the Line of Time, which only we know, and thence Argue and Draw Consequences, as in the Present Case, and make no Allowance or Abatement for Words which we Confess are only *ad Captum*, as you have Explain'd it to me.

(4.) But now Master, you have Instructed me in the Doctrin of this Union-Sermon, wherein Dr. Edwards wou'd have us United, that is, not that the Presbyterians shou'd come over to us, but that we shou'd go over to them, in their Doctrins of Predestination and Eternal Decrees. And of this

this I think sufficient has been said, therefore we will Dismiss the Doctor as to that. But I wou'd gladly know whether he speaks any thing in Defence of *Episcopacy*, or bestows any Exhortations upon them, no longer to Oppose that *Ancient and Apostolical Constitution of the Church*; that we may be *One* in that too? Without which how can we be said to be *One* while our *Church-Government* is not only *Different* but *Opposite*?

Rehears. He says not a word upon that Point. He thought it not worth while! He seeks not to Inform them in this matter. But calls us all *One*, and concludes with Praying for the Churches of England and Scotland.

Country-m. That is, for *Episcopacy* and *Presbytery*, is it not? And the one thinks the other *Unscriptural*, and Consequently *Unlawful*. And the *Presbyterians* think this a *Fundamental Point*, and are so Zealous in it, that (as you have shew'd before from the *Vindicator* of our *English Dissenters*) they are Resolv'd to stand it out upon the Point of *Episcopacy*; And that if we shou'd give them up our whole *Liturgy*, *Ceremonies*, *Habits*, &c. yet they will be Content with nothing Less than the total *Abolition* of the *Episcopal Hierarchy*. And the *Kirk* in Scotland have *Abjur'd* it. How then can we be *One*? How can the *Unity* of the Church be Preserv'd under such Wide and Irreconcilable Difference?

(5.) *Rehears.* The Doctor is very Angry at any who mention the *Unity* of the Church. He says, p. 18. *It is high time to learn Sobriety, and to be Sensible of the infinite Mischief that has lurk'd under the pretence of advancing the Unity of the Church.* And he falls upon Mr. Thorndike for Calling it the *Sovereign Law*. But he forgot that St. Paul made it so, when he Prefer'd it even to Faith. 1 Cor. xiii. 13. *And now abideth Faith, Hope, Charity, these three, but the Greatest of these is Charity.* And ver. 2. *Tho' I have all Faith, so that I cou'd remove Mountains, and have no Charity, I am nothing.*

(6.) *Country-m.* But what is the *Charity* here spoke of? It is commonly understood to be *Charitable to the Poor*, and to Relieve others.

Rehears. That cannot be, for the next words are, *And though I bestow all my Goods to feed the Poor.* Yet all is nothing without *Charity*. Therefore this is not the *Charity* there spoke of. The word *Αγάπη* which is here Translated *Charity* signifies Love. And to what this Love is to be Extended is shew'd in the Chapter preceding, where the *Apostle* do's Exemplify the *Unity* of the Church by the *Unity* of a *Natural*

Body, where all the *Members* are Acted by the same *Spirit*, and consequently have a fellow-feeling together, and all Rejoice or Mourn together, and Each seeks the *Preservation* and *Good* of the other. But if one *Member* shou'd Rise up against another, if the *Hand* shou'd pull out the *Eyes*, or the *Foot* Mutence against the *Head*, there wou'd be a *Schism* in the *Body*, which must tend to its *Destruction*. Better want the Best *Member* in the *Body*, than that it shou'd invade the Rest, and break the *Unity* of the *Body*. This the *Apostle* applies to the Church, and to that *Schism* was then at *Corinth*, on Account whereof he wrote this.

(7.) And the Occasion was more Plausible then, than any Pretence can be set up by the *Dissenters* now. For then many *Miraculous Gifts* were bestow'd, as of *Languages*, *Healing*, &c. And these made some Men Proud, that they broke loose from the Order of the Church, and Disdain'd to be under the Direction of their *Superiors*. Against these the *Apostle* writes, and tells them that tho' they cou'd Speak with the Tongue of Angels, and had Faith to Remove Mountains, and understood all Mysteries and all Knowledge, tho' they had Zeal to give all their Goods to the Poor, and their very Bodies to be Burnt for Christ, yet if they broke the *Unity* of the *Body*, that is, of the Church, all wou'd signify nothing to them. For that the *Unity* of the Church was of more Consequence than any of their Gifts, tho' *Miraculous*. Yet we have those now call'd *Gifted-Men*, tho' far from *Miraculous*, who think that Pretext enough to break the *Unity* of the Church, and Tear her, which is the *Body* of Christ, in Pieces!

(8.) And Dr. Edwards (I wish there were no more) is on their side against the *Apostles*. What a stirr do you keep about the *Unity* of the Church! It hinders many *Gifted-Men*! Do but hold *Predestination*, and be a good Calvinist, no matter tho' you Tear the Church in a Thousand Pieces! *Episcopacy* or *Presbytery*, or *Neither* or *Both*, or *Both* together, it is all one! The *Unity* of the Church, and *Schism* are *Fulsom Stuff*! *Korah* was no Offender! For he was a good *Presbyterian*, and the First of them. And the *Congregation* thought he was Over-Rul'd by *Arbitrary Power*, wherefore they Muteny'd the next Day, saying, *Ye have Destroy'd the People of the Lord.*

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